Greed

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Greed

by ElizaD

Summary

Part three of my seven deadly sins series.

Will agrees to let Hannibal take him shopping and winds up spending the day as a spoiled sugar baby. He enjoys it more than he should.

Can be read as a stand alone.

Notes

A long fic today because I was having a whale of a time writing this.

See the end of the work for more notes

Will felt like a chastised child and looked like one too, slumped in a chair with his arms crossed opposite a stern looking Jack, both glowering.

“This is not optional Will, the department needs funding so you need to attend,” Jack was using his ‘no arguments’ voice.

“I don’t do well at these events,” he muttered darkly.

“It’s just a party. One night in formal wear won’t kill you,” he snapped.

“Debatable. Can I go now? I have therapy,” he whined, feeling even more like a moody teen. Jack nodded curtly and Will left, slamming the door behind him,

Two hours later he was in the same position in Hannibal’s office, still unhappy with the whole situation. He wasn’t looking for a sympathetic ear, he wanted someone to fix his problem and Hannibal was the only person he trusted.

“What is it about attending this fundraiser that concerns you?” Hannibal asked.

“Too many people, being paraded around like Jack’s show pony,” he complained.

“You find such events overwhelming and making a spectacle of yourself,” He paused, licking his lips. “undignified.”

“Yes, and I have to go shopping for a new suit,” he said with a heavy sigh.

“Is there anything that would make you more comfortable with the situation?” Hannibal asked.

“Not having to go,” Hannibal remained silent, waiting. “If I had an escape route it would be easier. Donors find it rude when people walk away mid conversation because they really need a drink.”

“And your problems with having to acquire new clothing?” Hannibal prompted. “Is that also overwhelming?”

“Not really. It’s more that I resent buying a whole outfit I don’t like that I’ll wear maybe twice to events I don’t want to go to,” he said with a shrug. Hannibal stayed silent for a while watching him, Will squirmed in his seat staring at the floor in defiance. He waited patiently for Will to look at him, his face was all to easy to read and he could always last longer than Will even though the profiler had long ago realised what he was doing. Reluctantly Will lifted his head and focused on a spot by Hannibal’s left ear. Will was unhappy about having to go to the fundraising gala at all but he wanted help, not a sounding board.

“What is your sexuality, Will?” He asked, keeping his face perfectly placid even when Will met his eyes in shock. He tilted his head and waited.

“Bisexual,” he said cautiously, eyes drifting away again.

“I will help you with the first problem if you allow me to help you with the second issue,” he offered.

“I’m not sure what you mean.”

“I am invited to the Winter Gala every year as a potential donor and I know the majority of attendees. I can divert attention from you and steal you away when it becomes too much,” he explained.

“Like a date?” Will asked nervously

“I am your friend,” Hannibal answered. “I am always happy to help you, in any way.”

“What did you mean by, erm, ‘allowing’ you to help me with my clothes?” He asked, fiddling with his shirt cuffs.

“I wish to take you shopping this Saturday. I have an excellent tailor,” he said with a soft smile. He could see the denial on Will’s lips and cut him off. “I can assure you, Miss Celine is a genius and will make you look enchanting.”

“You want to take me shopping?” Will asked with a frown.

“Yes.”

“Why?” His eyes were distrustful but he had not said no.

“I enjoy your company and if you must dress up for the occasion why not look your best?” He asked. “I believe it would help you to feel more comfortable,” Will squirmed, sinking deeper into the chair.

“I’m not wearing anything floral or paisley,” he eventually said. Hannibal smiled, enigmatic as always but with a hint of triumph.

“I will inform Miss Celine of your hard limits,” he answered.

At five to ten am the following Saturday Will stood on his front porch in the freezing wind, dreading what was to come. He wasn’t sure why he had agreed to let Hannibal take him shopping, whatever he ended up buying would probably cost more than his entire wardrobe put together. The FBI and his teaching position paid well enough but a childhood watching his Father struggle to make ends meet had taught Will frugality and he doubted that anything he wore would help him feel more comfortable. Unless it was something that would allow him to blend in with the wall. He wanted to cancel the whole thing, perhaps if he spent the day playing in the snow with his dogs in his underwear he’d get sick enough that he wouldn’t

have to attend the gala at all. It was still two weeks away, he could endure today and try to make himself ill closer to the date.

At exactly ten o'clock Hannibal's sleek black Bentley arrived in his driveway. Hannibal didn't get out but instead rolled down the window. "Good morning Will. I would suggest a thicker coat unless you are hoping to catch pneumonia and thus avoid this whole business," he looked far too amused. I guess the plan to make himself ill was a little obvious. Will couldn't hold back a pleased moan when he slid into the passenger seat, after the chill of the outside the heated interior of the car was bliss.

"How long have you been going to this Miss Celine?" Will asked in an attempt to make small talk.

"I met her as a teenager, my aunt would wear nothing but her creations. She was always very talented and the very day I came to America I found out where she was based," he answered. "Luckily she is not far away and was most accommodating when I called, though we can expect quite the scolding when we arrive. Two weeks is a very tight deadline," he pointed out.

"Can't I just buy off the rack?" Will asked.

"Absolutely not," Hannibal answered. "Do not worry Will, Miss Celine is going to love you."

Miss Celine's establishment was secreted away in a back street just outside of Balmtimore. Hannibal held the door open for Will and took his coat as a short beaming woman with shocking red hair came to greet them. "Hannibal Lecter. It has been too long!" She announced in a thick french accent. "Two weeks, you naughty boy," she scolded playfully.

"I know it is short notice but you are the only one I trust," he answered smoothly, bending to kiss her on both cheeks. "Please forgive me."

"If it was anyone but you…" she warned him, wagging a finger. "So where is this lovely young thing you need me to work my magic with," her sharp eyes fell on Will, she looked

him over shrewdly before smiling brightly. “Oh yes, he will do nicely,” she said. Her smile was warm and friendly but her comment terrified him.

“May I introduce my dear friend Will Graham,” Hannibal said, his hand on the small of Will’s back edging him forward. “Will, this is the incomparable Miss Celine.”

“Flattery will get you everywhere young man, as you well know,” she teased. Will cracked a smile at that, he’d never heard anyone refer to Hannibal as ’young man’. “Natalie!” She called with a hand clap. A tall pretty brunette came rushing to her side. “Ah there you are. Get a black coffee for Count Lecter and bring me a selection of black jackets for his ‘dear friend’,” she ordered sharply before taking Will by the arm and leading him to a thick velvet curtain.

“Count?” Will repeated. Hannibal shrugged as though the title had completely slipped his mind.

“You didn’t know?” Miss Celine asked. Will shook his head. “You always were a clever boy Hannibal. A man of your heritage must beware of title hunters and gold diggers,” she chuckled darkly. The kind of laugh that came from a pack of cigarettes a day. “Now, let's get you measured up,” Will followed without protest, if Hannibal was difficult to say no to he could see Miss Celine would have her own way no matter what he said. “Hannibal informed me that getting you into a pattern would be a battle, luckily those pretty eyes are a beauty on their own and I suspect simplicity would bring them out best,” she could. “Yes, you are quite as lovely as Hannibal promised me,” she patted him on the arm in a maternal way. “Now up on the stool you go!”

Will obliged and Miss Celine chatted away about her various past clients. “Of course everything Marilyn wore looked perfect on her, though she never believed it, poor child. Hannibal, what are you doing?” She asked when he stood up to examine the rack of jackets and shirts Natalie had been wheeling over. He removed several and placed them on the sofa behind him.

“I don’t approve of shoulder pads,” he answered, examining a pale grey shirt before placing it back on the rack with a nod. “Slim fit, I think?”

“Natalie, the cobalt blue shift for Mr Graham please,” she asked politely. “You,” she turned to face Hannibal. “Go busy yourself with ties and leave us be. Off with you, shoo!” Will raised his eyebrows as he watched Hannibal be literally shooed away by the tiny woman. Will was impressed, and amused. He was beginning to like Miss Celine.

“I think he has all the ties,” he said when she returned her attention to him.

“I expect he does and he is of course quite right about the slim fit, but we needn’t tell him that," she said with a wink. Natalie held out a striking shirt for Miss Celine. “Oh, absolutely perfect,” she purred. She selected a jet black jacket and trousers and hung them on the wall. “Now you change into those so I can get a good idea how the finished article will look. Natalie, please go and find something to distract Count lecter so I may do my job,” Will was left alone behind the curtain to change. He changed quickly, he didn’t hate it here.

Usually he would buy his clothes at a convenient discount store being jostled by bargain hunters while bored children screamed and Will tried not to scream along with them. Miss Celine’s store was much more relaxing, perhaps because they were the only customers and the warm neutral tones reminded him of Hannibal’s office, one of the few places he felt comfortable. He could hear a sewing machine from somewhere in the store and the white noise was pleasant. The suit looked good, apart from the two inches of ankle on show and Will didn’t feel like he wanted to crawl out of his skin. The material was soft and didn’t irritate his skin like formal wear usually did. He tried to smooth down his curls but they continued to do their own thing as usual. With no warning Hannibal threw back the curtain and came to join him. “You got past Miss Celine,” he said.

“She received a call from a very demanding client and I decided to take advantage of her distraction,” Hannibal answered, eyes moving over Will’s body. “I see her taste has not faded with age,” he said quietly.

“The pants don’t fit,” Will muttered, squirming uncomfortably under Hannibal’s gaze. “My legs are too long,” he said.

“The pants are too short,” Hannibal corrected him. “Your suit will be made to your measurements, today is for measuring and style selection,” he explained, sliding his hands along Will’s shoulders. “What do you think?”

“I like the shirt but the jacket feels a little snug,” he said, twisting around in front of the mirror.

“Is it uncomfortably tight?” He asked.

“No.”

“The shirt is perfect. The jacket looks fine, it is slim fit and is meant to look that way,” Hannibal purred, sliding the jacket off Will’s shoulders causing his stomach to swoop as though he had missed a step. “Try this,” he handed Will another jacket, shorter than the last and not quite as tight a fit. “Hmm. I like the length but the former had a better cut,” he said, turning Will around to examine him further. Will began to relax as Hannibal started to explain the different fits and cuts and shades of black. Will didn’t understand most of it but his quiet words in the small space were soothing as he was changed into various jackets that looked almost identical to him. When asked he gave his opinion but mostly just enjoyed Hannibals’s touch and attention.

“Hannibal!” Will almost jumped out of his skin when Miss Celine returned. Hannibal took a large step back and Will missed his long fingers instantly. “I’ve a good mind not to tell you what I just heard,” she warned, coming into the space with a pair of trousers slung over his arm. “Here, these should cover your ankles,” she handed Will the trousers before pulling Hannibal away by his arm. “Luckily for you however I can not resist some gossip,” she said chuckling. Will pulled on the trousers, pleased that he looked much less awkward in the longer length. Miss Celine reappeared without Hannibal. “No, not that jacket, too loose. Off,” she ordered. “This one,” she handed him yet another jacket, it was another slim fit and ended just under the waistband of his trousers. “Perfect!” she announced, happily. “Shows off the bum nicely,” she purred with a wink, Will blushed and she laughed again. “Now there is just the tie to be chosen.”

“It’s black tie so I’ll just be wearing a clip-on,” he answered.

“You most certainly will not,” she said, sounding scandalised. “Bow ties are boring and clip-ons are for children. A tie is the perfect way to add character to a suit,” she swept out of the changing room, less than a minute later Hannibal returned with a few ties.

“Miss Celine is going to make you stand in the corner,” Will warned him.

“I was sent in to give my approval before we move on to selecting a tie for you,” he answered.

“Do I meet your standards?” Will asked.

“Turn around,” Hannibal ordered and waited for Will to turn on the spot for him. “You look more sublime than I could have possibly imagined,” Hannibal answered, voice low and quiet. Will swallowed, the air suddenly felt very charged with something undefinable. Hannibal turned to hang the ties on the clothes rack and Will let out the breath he’d been holding. Hannibal picked out a slim black tie with an abstract display of glittering silver running along one side.

He held it up for Will’s approval and he saw that the silver pattern was not thread but small crystals, he nodded and Hannibal looped the fabric around his neck. Standing in front of him Hannibal began to adjust the length and knot the tie. “I know how to tie a tie,” Will protested.

“I’m sure you do,” Hannibal answered, focusing on the task. Will found himself watching his long fingers on the silk, the small stool put him face to face with Hannibal but it also made him feel on display as Hannibal made adjustments to his appearance. Hannibal smoothed down the tie and seemed about to step back when he hesitated and instead brushed a stray curl away from Will’s eyes. Will met his eyes and held his breath, unable to move or even thick too clearly. There was an unfamiliar heat in Hannibal’s gaze, wide black pupils ringed by a deep maroon. He’d never seen eyes the colour of Hannibal’s before, they were even more distracting than most peoples. Will felt heat spread through his chest, heart hammering, his eyes were so beautiful he couldn’t look away. His eyes stayed on Hannibal’s as he stepped to the side “What do you think?” He asked, voice impossibly calm as he gestured to the mirror. Will reluctantly tore his eyes away from Hannibal’s and faced his own reflection.

His eyebrows raised in surprise. He normally hated formal wear, it made him uncomfortable from the inside out but he looked good. Better than good, it might be the best he’d ever looked. The fabric skimmed his body, making him look lean and long rather than skinny. Dark colours complimented his hair, suddenly looking artfully tousled rather than a barely brushed mess. The sapphire colour of the shirt made his eyes shine and even the dark circles he was plagued with seemed to have faded some. He could almost pass for someone who managed six hours of sleep the night before. His back was straighter and whole body looked more relaxed. He cleared his throat. “Yeah, it looks good,” he answered, voice rough.

“Do you feel comfortable?” Hannibal asked.

Will rolled his shoulders and smiled. “Yeah, it feels really good.”

“Good,” Hannibal purred with a small smile. He reached for another tie, patterned with blue and black thick diagonal stripes.

“I like that one,” he said when Hannibal removed the elegant black one.

“Then you have choices. How many ties do you own?” He asked. “You wear them for class, yes?”

“Yeah, I think three,” he answered, unsure as his ties and socks often went missing and were found in a dog's bed weeks later.

“Then there is no reason for you not to acquire more,” he said with a small smile.

“How many ties do you have Doctor Lecter?” He asked, raising an eyebrow.

“Two hundred and fifteen,” he answered without missing a beat.

“Who needs that many ties?” Will asked in disbelief.

“No-one,” Hannnibal answered. “At least a dozen were gifts,” he answered. Stepping back to admire the tie as it shone in the light. He striped it off and placed it aside with the studded black that Will had liked. The next tie he approached Will with was wider with a paisley pattern.

“Absolutely not,” Will said sharply. Hannibal huffed out a laugh.

“Very well,” he placed it with the other ties. “Two hundred and sixteen.”

Miss Celine returned twenty minutes later with pins and dress chalk. “Have the two of you settled on a tie?” She asked.

“I have found several suitable,” Hannibal answered. “And a few more for my own collection.”

“Let me make sure the length is perfect and then you can get back into your street clothes.” She knelt down gracefully on a cushion. “Yoga and a fish heavy diet,” she said, winking at Will. “I have the joints of a twenty year old,” she answered proudly.

“I will see you in a few moments,” Hannibal said, collecting the neatly folded ties from his yes pile.

“He really cannot take his eyes off you,” Miss Celine said warmly, when Hannibal departed. Will shuffled uncomfortably and made a non-commital noise. “Stand still or I’ll stick you with a needle,” she scolded. Satisfied after a few more altercations she moved to her feet. “All done,” she announced. “You should receive the suit in about a week and a half. Believe me, he won’t be able to keep his hand off you either,” she said with a throaty chuckle and left Will to change back into his jeans and faded shirt.

He took a few minutes in the private space to breathe. Was he going on a date with his therapist? Not technically his therapist, his friend, not that that made the situation any better. He hadn’t exactly agreed to a date but he also hadn’t clarified whether it was in fact a date or not. Did he want it to be a date? That was a question he didn’t have the energy to answer. He was attracted to men although he’d never really ‘dated’ a man, his experience with his own sex was limited to one night stands and akward fumblings during his teens and early twenties. Relationships were too much for him to handle. But Hannibal hadn’t offered him a relationship, hadn’t even really asked him on a date. Will groaned, flopping into the soft chair in the changing area. He considered asking, but the idea was too embarrassing, especially with Hannibal’s habit of turning questions back on him, leaving Will to decide if it was a date or not. Will wasn’t ready to make that decision and if the answer was no he’d be far too embarrassed to ever be alone with Hannibal again. Yes, embarrassed was the word, not

disappointed. But he would be disappointed if he lost Hannibal as a friend. Somehow he had become dependent upon the older man to keep him from spiralling out of control and he really didn't want to go to the ball alone. He let out a deep sigh and resigned himself to a night of uncertainty.

Natalie was packing some shirts into a bag when Will emerged. "Will, good I need your opinion on something," Hannibal said, walking into a secluded corner of the store, looking over his shoulder to see Will following. He smiled softly to himself, it seemed Will was in an amiable mood, otherwise today would have been much more difficult. He had two winter coats hanging up, waiting for them. "Which do you prefer?" He asked Will.

"They're both nice," Will answered.

"I would like to know your preference," Hannibal insisted. Will looked at the garments, they were both fine. One was long in a tan brown with a thick belt while the other was shorter but thicker in a soft grey. He moved forward and ran his fingers along the grey sleeve, the fabric a textured weave, looking closer there were traces of black thread interspersed with the grey.

"I like the grey one?" He answered, Hannibal raised an eyebrow at the question in his tone. "The grey one," he repeated with more certainty. Hannibal took it from its hanger and held it open for Will to try on. "I don't need a new coat," Will argued.

"I disagree," Hannibal responded. "Please," he said and waited. Eventually Will relented and slid his arms into the sleeves letting Hannibal settle the fabric over his shoulders. Neither spoke as Hannibal turned him by his shoulders and buttoned up the coat. It fitted over his shoulders, not as snug as the jackets and he would be able to wear it over his suit without ruining the effect, the length ending about half way down his thighs. Will felt himself heat up but told himself that it was from wearing the thick coat inside and not the way Hannibal's long fingers were tracing the lapels, the same heat in his eyes. "Perfect fit," he said, pleased.

"I can't afford a new coat and suit," Will said, not stepping away. His brow furrowed when Hannibal tilted his head and gave an amused smile. Those distracting fingers moved to the back of his neck, Will found himself wondering how they would feel on bare skin. Calloused like his own or surprisingly soft? The strength in them was clear even through the thick tweed and his breathing was shallow. He heard a snap and saw Hannibal holding the tag in his hand. His eyes widened but there was no real fire in his anger. Hannibal gave him a rare grin and walked to the counter.

“Please place Mr Graham's coat in another bag, we will be taking the grey tweed,” he instructed Natalie.

“Your taste never fails,” Miss Celine said, smiling in appreciation as Will came to join them.

“Thank you Miss Celine though I’m sure Will would look lovely in anything,” he said softly. Natalie smiled knowingly at Will and he cringed inwardly, staring at the ground. He looked up when he felt something soft wrap around his neck, pulling taunt causing his breath to catch yet again. Hannibal was back in his personal space again wrapping an emerald green scarf around his neck, another tag lay on the counter. He gave Hannibal an annoyed look and received an infruitating small smile in response. “Miss Celine, may I once again thank you for agreeing to work in such a tight time frame. It will never happen again.”

“See that it doesn’t,” she said sternly. Hannibal stepped forward to take the bags, murmuring a thank you to Natalie who smiled brightly. “I expect to see you again Mr Graham,” she said, eyes twinkling brightly. She took his hand and pressed two hard small objects into his palm, closing his finger around them with a wink.

“Merry Christmas, Miss Celine,” Will said with a smile. Hannibal returned to his side with three large bags in hand. “Do you need a deposit for the suit?” He asked, retrieving his wallet and hoping the coat wasn’t too much out of his price range, Miss Celine looked confused.

“It’s taken care of,” Hannibal said, guiding Will to the door with a hand on his back. “Good day Miss Celine, Natalie.”

Once they were outside Will turned to Hannibal. “Are you insane?” He hissed. Hannibal looked at Will’s hand and smiled.

“Miss Celine gave you candy,” he said. Will opened his hand to see two gold wrapped hard candies. “She must have liked you a great deal,” he strode towards the car, placing the bags in the spacious trunk.

“Doctor Lecter!” Will snapped, voice hard. “Did you just buy me a suit and coat?” He asked.

“Yes, and a scarf” he answered, face calm though he was tempted to laugh at Will’s continued use of his title. He was going to have to insist on his first name at the gala. “We have a few other places to visit but I think lunch would be a wise choice around now. I know an excellent Italian place, the chef is very talented,” he held open the passenger door as Will stood by the boot torn between shock and anger.

“We are discussing this Doctor,” he warned in a low tone. Hannibal paused for a moment.

“At the restaurant,” he answered eventually.

“Fine,” he snapped getting into the car. He glared out of the window on the way to the restaurant, trying to organise his thoughts. He had no idea how much Hannibal had spent or why he thought it was appropriate behaviour. Miss Celine didn’t seem to find any of it odd, perhaps Hannibal had taken others there before him, the thought caused a dull ache. Natalie probably thought he was some sort of sugar baby, his face began to flush at the thought but he felt a faint tingle in his stomach. He ignored the tingle and focused on his anger, he felt blindsided and confused. His eyes slid along to Hannibal’s profile, he was focused on the road ahead, at least he wasn’t smiling at him.

He stayed silent until they were seated in the restaurant, thankfully the hostess had given them an intimate booth at the back. He waited until the waiter had filled their water glasses before speaking. “That was not appropriate,” he said evenly.

“I don’t understand,” Hannibal said innocently, looking over the wine list. “You agreed to this.”

“I did not agree to let you buy me clothes,” Will said, keeping his voice as low as he could, not wanting to have a public shouting match which would make him seem like a raving lunatic while Hannibal sat there completely at ease.

“You agreed to let me take you shopping,” he argued.

“That is not the same thing,” Will snapped.

“I believe it is,” Hannibal answered. “Red or white?” He asked calmly.

“You were intending this when you invited me,” he accused.

“Not the argument. I thought my intentions were clear,” he said, face clear of any shame.

“And the other places you want to visit?”

“I told you I wanted to introduce you to a finer aftershave,” he said, voice dipping lower and finally looking at Will. “And then there are accessories to consider.”

“Did you intend for me to pay for any of it?” Will asked.

“No.”

“And this meal?”

“No.”

The silence continued as Will considered walking out and going home immediately. “What do you want, Doctor Lecter?” he asked eventually.

“To help you,” Hannibal said again.

“You want something in return.”

“No, I don’t,” Hannibal said, sighing deeply. “I have a sizable inheritance, I receive royalties from various medical journals, I have many high paying patients and investments.”

“So you’re rich,” Will sneered. He almost saw Hannibal’s lip twitch in annoyance.

“I have more funds than I could spend in a lifetime. A five-figure suit is a drop in the ocean to me,” he explained.

“Five-figures,” Will repeated in a whisper, and that was just the suit.

“If you wish to repay me, I would only ask you to accept the situation and say thank you,” Hannibal instructed.

“You want me to accept the clothes, aftershave and whatever else you want to buy me?” Will asked in disbelief.

“Yes.”

“What if I don’t like the shoes you pick?” Will asked, playing devil's advocate and kicking himself.

“You do get a say, I would not expect you to accept anything you hate,” Hannibal said softly.

Will took a deep breath and he raised his face to meet Hannibal’s eyes, forcing himself not to waver. “I want gloves.”

“Of course.”

“The most expensive ones.”

“I believe I know a place that sells some wonderfully soft leather gloves with a fleece lining.”

“And the most expensive shoes, Italian leather.”

“Agreed.”

Will wet his lips and challenged Hannibal further. “Boots,” he added softly. Hannibal's lip curled.

“I do not believe your suit was designed to be worn with boots,” he argued.

“Not for the party, I want some better everyday boots,” he clarified, daring Hannibal with his eyes. Hannibal smiled after a few seconds.

“I’m sure we can find something to suit,” he said, eyes burning. He looked delighted.

“Thank you for the suit, Doctor Lecter,” he eventually said, voice like silk.

Hannibal’s smile grew. “You are welcome, Will. Would you like to select the wine?” He asked. Will nodded and accepted the wine menu. He read it in silence, already knowing what he was going to order. If Hannibal was determined to spoil him, Will was going to behave like a spoiled brat. Hannibal may be amused by his pushing now but Will was determined to drive him crazy until he never wanted to buy him so much as a pack of gum ever. “Do you know what you would like to eat?” Hannibal asked politely.

“What’s most expensive?” Will asked.

“Does it matter?” Hannibal asked with a spark of amusement.

“No, that’s what I want,” Will answered and Hannibal nodded. When the waiter arrived to take their order Will requested a bottle of the most expensive red wine on the menu then let Hannibal order the food. Before the waiter left he asked for a side of garlic bread. The party may be uncertain but he wanted to be clear that today was not a date. The waiter took the menu and left them alone.

“You can’t buy me,” Will said eventually, laying down the ground rules of their game. Hannibal was unfazed.

“A person who can be bought is not worth having,” he answered. Will made himself hold Hannibal’s eye until their meals arrived.

He ate unhurriedly, the food was truly delicious and he thanked Hannibal courteously. Hannibal watched him the whole time, a small smile on his face the whole time. Will felt like even though he had started the game he was already losing but nothing would make him back down.

Hannibal was delighted. He had expected Will to resist every step of the way but as ever his precious boy was impossible to predict. Bedelia accused him of ‘playing with his food’ unknowing how right she was but playing Will’s game was utterly thrilling. Will could be as bratty and demanding as he liked and Hannibal would continue to enjoy lavishing him with gifts and attention. If Hannibal had his way he would give Will the best of everything for the rest of his days. If Will thought that he could push Hannibal into saying no he was very much mistaken and completely out of his depth. The fact that he was trying was fascinating though and Hannibal spent the whole meal planning out his moves. A good chess player always thinks five moves ahead and he was a great player, no matter what the game.

He watched Will’s teeth tear into a slice of garlic bread, his gorgeous lips closing around the warm dough and the slight bulge of his throat when he swallowed. Hannibal had to remind himself to keep his expression in place, something that had always come naturally to him in the past, before Will. Watching Will eat had become one of his favourite pastimes. It was much more satisfying to watch Will eat the food prepared in his own home, seasoned with his seed but he was still beautiful and watching enjoy food he had paid for was erotic in it’s own

way. He knew his arousal, an arousal that bordered on obsessiveness, was shining in his eyes and he admired Will for his ability to keep looking him in the eye despite how much he disliked eye contact. He never once looked away and Hannibal did not let his expression flinch for a second.

He wanted to laugh every time Will reached for the garlic bread, he knew exactly what that had been about. Will was setting boundaries, it was a tragically teenage way of doing it but he made his point. Today was not a date although the night of the Winter Gala was still undefined. He wondered if Will would find a way to clarify that. If he was forced to make an educated guess he'd say that dear Will was still too shy to ask him if it was a date, not after Hannibal had sidestepped the question once. He hadn't answered the question because he hadn't decided how to play the night yet, keeping things undefined gave him more options with moves and Hannibal enjoyed options. Will was able to be effortlessly unpredictable, why shouldn't Hannibal be the same? "I am pleased you are learning to take the time to savour your food," he commented evenly.

Will took his time finishing the bite that was in his mouth. "I have always liked Italian food," he answered.

"Have you ever visited Italy? No matter where I go there is no food that compares to authentic Italian cuisine, even Paris can not produce such intense flavours," he said wistfully.

"I've never left the continent," Will answered.

"I'll take you," he said. "Paris, as well."

"Boundaries, Doctor Lecter," Hannibal nodded but continued to smile.

"Not yet," he purred, leaning forward.

"Not ever," Hannibal smiled widened, a flash of teeth becoming visible, but he did not answer.

When the waiter collected their empty plates he asked if they wished to see the dessert menu. Hannibal looked to Will with a raised eyebrow, challenging him to continue with his plan of making a dent in Hannibal's account. "They do serve an excellent tiramisu," he encouraged gently. Will nodded. "Two servings of tiramisu," he said, briefly looking at the waiter who nodded and scurried away, smiling at Hannibal with pink cheeks.

The dessert was perfectly decadent, as Hannibal knew it would be having visited the restaurant before. When Will took his first bite his eye closed and he moaned. Hannibal titled his head. "I was worried the tiramisu would be too bitter for your sweet tooth," he said, taking a bite of his own.

"There is a sweetness underneath the coffee," Will said thoughtfully, eyes half closed as he focused on the flavour.

"Marsala, a sweet red wine. It balances out the dish very well," he answered.

"Delicious."

"Yes," his eyes fell to Will's lips, closing his mouth around his fork, cocoa powder dusting his lips until he licked them clean. Hannibal bit back a faint moan, licking his own lips, desire racing through him. "Delicious," he agreed softly.

Will behaved beautifully when the bill arrived. The waiter placed it neatly between them and Will pushed it away, towards Hannibal before reclining in his seat. Hannibal handed over his credit card instantly, not even looking at the price. When the water returned his card with the receipt he was looking decidedly flushed but did not say anything. Hannibal glanced down at the receipt and saw a name and phone number. He slipped the paper into his pocket, folding it carefully, not a business card but it had the information he needed. Propositioning him in front of his dining companion was rude, as if the young blonde could compete with his perfect Will. He stood up abruptly from the table. "Gloves first, my dear Will?" He asked. Will raised his eyebrow at the endearment but didn't protest.

"No tip?" Hannibal did not wish to tip the rude waiter but he would do anything for the look on Will's face. His bright eyes smouldered as he gazed up at Hannibal with his lips parted. It reminded him of the statues of saints he'd show Will in Europe, their faces caught in the

moment when agony and ecstasy met and bled together. Smiling sweetly he opened his wallet and left a sizable tip. Will nodded, pleased, and stood up.

At the door he let Will put his new coat on without interference but looped the soft tie around his neck, standing in his personal space and knotting it tightly glaring at the waiter who was watching the exchange in disappointment. He would accept expensive gifts with fluttering eyelashes and flirtatious thanks, but Will was the only one he was interested in spoiling.

Hannibal drove them to an expensive shopping district. At this time of year it was more crowded than he would have liked, factoring in Will's aversion to crowds. Hannibal opened Will's door for him before he could do it himself and didn't comment on Will's good natured eye roll and reluctant smile. He placed one broad palm flat on the small of Will's back, quickly guided him into the store.

Its bright wide open spaces caused Will to relax, at least partly, while not as private as Miss Celine's, there was much more space than on the crowded street outside so customers were not forced to brush against one another. "We can find you some lovely gloves here as well as shoes," Hannibal said.

"And boots?" Will reminded him.

"There is a store across the street that would have a better selection of quality winter boots," he said smoothing, guiding Will to a display of fine leather gloves.

"Wouldn't the other place sell better quality gloves?" He asked.

"For mountain climbing and everyday wear, perhaps, but the early forecast for the night of the fundraiser is predicting a very cold night so suitable gloves are a must," he said firmly. He hoped Will would demand another pair of gloves but he was quiet, examining the leather glove display. "If I may offer an opinion?" He ventured, Will turned his attention to Hannibal. "The green would match your scarf perfectly.

"I didn't choose the scarf," Will pointed out. He tried on a dark burgundy pair, flexing his fingers and admiring the deep, rich colour. A salesman hurried over, recognising the signs of

money, both men wearing expensive coats and not checking the price tags. “Cashmere lined gloves, Alexander McQueen,” he said by way of greeting. “Perfect for the winter weather.”

“My dear friend here lives in a very isolated area, he requires some high quality gloves or he may lose one of his lovely fingers,” Hannibal said with his most charming smile. The salesman quickly realised who was paying and refocused his attention.

“These are of the highest quality, Sir,” he assured Hannibal, turning on the charm in hopes of making a sale of the overpriced gloves. “Did you have a particular colour in mind?”

“Will? He asked, Will had placed the burgundy pair to one aide and was eyeing a pale brown pair critically.

“Not brown,” he answered, reaching for a red pair and pulling them on. “Maybe red,” he said, placing them with the burgandy, though he looked uncertain about the decision.

“We may need a few minutes,” Hannibal told the eager young man before turning back to Will with a soft smile.

“We have some matching hats and scarfs if you would like to see them,” he suggested, hopefully.

“Yes, thank you,” Hannibal said and they were left alone again.

“Why is he talking to you?” Will grumbled, adding a green pain to the pile without trying them on, Hannibal nodded in approval. “I’m the one buying gloves,” Hannibal raised an eyebrow. “You know what I mean.”

“The staff here are trained to focus on the person paying,” he

said mildly. “Don’t let it concern you.”

“It’s irritating,” Will complained, but pulled on the black pair Hannibal handed him before shaking his hand putting them with the brown. The young man hurried back with a display of scarves and hats.

“These are the ones designed to go with the gloves but if you’d like to see some more colours there are some others of very high quality,” he said, still addressing Hannibal.

“I suggest you show them to Will, as he is in need of your products,” Hannibal said, polite but cool, a hand lightly touching Will’s arm for a moment. The salesman immediately redirected his attention.

“Sir? Do you have a preference on colour or style?” He asked.

“Do you have a darker red?” Will asked, the red he had selected was a little too bright for his taste, a fire engine red. “More of a blood red?” Hannibal brought a hand to his mouth to cover the smile. Will’s eye slid to him but there was no hint that he meant anything by the comment.

“Of course, Sir,” and off he ran again, returning moments later with gloves, a scarf and hat all in a deep blood red. “These gloves are lined with faux fur in bone white rather than cashmere, slightly more expensive but very luxurious,” he said, eyes flicking over to Hannibal for a moment. “Real fur has gone out of fashion it seems,” he joked. Will scoffed.

“There’s no appreciation for cruelty nowadays,” he sneered, tugging on the gloves and holding his wrist out for Hannibal to secure the bronze poppers at the hem. “Do you like them?” He asked, ignoring the irritating man behind the counter.

“Lovely, red is definitely your colour,” Hannibal said warmly. “But please indulge me and take the green as well,” he asked, sweetly. Will nodded in agreement. “So the dark red scarf, gloves and hat and the green cashmere lined, yes?” Will nodded again and Hannibal turned to the young man. “If you could ring those up for us we do have a few other purchases to make.”

“Thank you, Doctor Lecter,” Will said with a wicked little smile. The salesman looked confused but did not comment. They moved up to the third floor shoe department, a stylish store bag in Will’s hand.

Will grimaced as they found a seat, he hated shoe shopping most of all, having his feet out in public felt weird, luckily they were seated in a secluded corner that offered a little privacy. “Hello, gentleman, what are you looking for today?” Asked a bubbly teenage employee, at least she acknowledged both of them.

“Good afternoon, Lizzie,” Hannibal greeted her, reading her name tag. “Could you bring us a selection of black formal shoes in a size ten please?”

“Of course, any limit to what you would like to spend?” She asked.

“Money is no object,” Hannibal said with a dismissive wave.

“The most expensive you have,” Will said with his own smile. Lizzie nodded and walked away.

“Having fun?” Hannibal asked.

“Yes. Though I’m not relishing the idea of getting my feet out in front of strangers,” Will said. Hannibal removed his coat, folding it and placing it neatly across the back of the small couch. Will shrugged off his own and let it pool around his waist.

“You are lucky that tweed does not wrinkle,” Hannibal said sternly. Will laughed at his annoyance but did not move from his position. Hannibal considered pushing back when Lizzie returned with a small wheeled cart of shoes in various styles. “Thank you, do you think we could be left with some privacy please?” The blonde nodded her head, curls bouncing.

“Sure. Just yell if you need anything else,” she said brightly and bounced away, leaving them alone in the small alcove.

Will shrunk away when Hannibal knelt down in front of him and began to untie his laces carefully. “I can…” Hannibal paused, looking up at him, he waited and within seconds Will broke eye contact and Hannibal continued, gently removing Will’s shoes. Will had already grabbed a leather pair before Hannibal had finished and hurriedly put them on himself. His fingers fumbled over the laces and Hannibal took the opportunity to bat his hands away and lace them up himself.

“Very attractive,” he said from his knelt position, holding one of Will’s feet in his hands. “How do they feel?” He asked.

Will wriggled his toes, playing for time as he swallowed heavily. “I think they're too pointed, my toes are pinched together,” he said, hating how rough his voice sounded.

“Comfort is the most important factor,” Hannibal responded, his own voice perfectly steady. He tugged off the tight shoes and reached for another pair. “These ones are of a softer leather and hopefully will be more comfortable,” he said, easing them onto Will’s feet.

“Were you a salesperson in your youth?” Will asked, in a teasing tone.

“No. Perhaps I missed my calling,” he replied, pulling the laces tight. “Thoughts?”

“Much more comfortable,” Will said.

“Shame they are as ugly as sin,” Hannibal replied, already taking them off.

“I thought I got a say,” Will argued.

“Yes, but so do I,” Hannibal replied, examining the other options on the cart. Will curled his feet under the seat uncomfortably. “Why does removing your shoes in public cause you such distress?” He asked, selecting a softer but more pointed pair. A mix of the first two.

“It doesn’t distress me,” he answered. “I just don’t find it comfortable, feet are disgusting.”

“No part of you is disgusting,” Hannibal said firmly. “Although I doubt the hole in your sock helps with finding comfortable shoes,” he teased lightly, fingers moving over the exposed inch on his heel. Will blushed furiously as his brain helpfully observed that Hannibal’s fingertips were wonderfully soft and gentle. His stomach lurched with want when Hannibal's fingers left his skin and his attention returned to the shoes. Will tried to remember the last time he felt another's skin on his, a brush of fingers in the lab or something. The only thing he could think of was the doomed kiss with Alana and the moments when Hannibal fingers grazed his when handing him a glass of wine, everytime. He suddenly felt needy and touch starved, his mind wandering far from the situation. “Will?” His attention snapped back to the here and now to see Hannibal giving him a questioning look.

“What?” He blurted. “Sorry, I-I mean pardon,” he amended when he caught Hannibal’s scolding expression.

“I asked for your opinion of these shoes,” he repeated. “They are plain but very finely made, they will go well with your new suit,” he said. “If they are comfortable, of course.”

Will flexed his feet and stood. He paced back and forth a couple of times, feeling Hannibal’s eyes follow him across the small space. “Good,” he said with a smile. He returned to his seat and allowed Hannibal to remove the shoes.

“And the most expensive,” Hannibal said with a soft chuckle. “It seems you have expensive tastes.”

“Too rich for your blood?” Will asked, amusement and challenge lacing the words.

Hannibal shook his head smiling. “Wicked boy,” he said fondly, moving to his feet. “Excuse me,” he moved away with the chosen shoes and Will heard his low voice speaking to

someone as he yanked his worn boots back on. “Will one pair suffice?” He asked, raising a thin eyebrow, canines glinting.

“From this store,” he said. Hannibal held out a hand to help Will to his feet, Will took it eagerly and did not instantly let go. Hannibal’s skin was unusually smooth, no calluses or scars, so different from Will’s own rough skin. He felt Hannibal’s fingers squeeze his for a fraction of a second before letting go.

At the counter his shiny new shoes were boxed and bagged, waiting to be paid for. Hannibal handed over his card with a pleased smile before handing the bag to Will.

“Thank you,” Will said breathlessly. He turned to smile at the young blonde. “He spoils me,” he told her, biting his lip to keep from laughing at the micro-expression on Hannibal’s face. Not shocked, never that, not even surprised but certainly intrigued by his words. Will grinned as they left the store side by side. He had no idea who was winning this game but he was enjoying playing more than he had anticipated and the game wasn’t over yet.

The next round was in a small fragrance shop. “I do have a specific kind of scent in mind,” Hannibal said as they entered. “Though if you wish to browse or simply ask the shop assistant for the most expensive, go ahead,” he dared. “However, I refuse to leave this store with anything with a ship on the bottle.”

“Good afternoon, gentlemen,” the man behind the counter was probably a few years older than Hannibal and had a clear British accent. “And who are we shopping for today?”

“Me,” Will answered, raising a hand awkwardly.

“Very well, what are your preferences?” He asked politely.

“Uh, I guess I don’t know,” he said, squirming. “I kind of just wear what I get for christmas usually but I was hoping for something, um, better for a work party, gala thing…” he trailed off, helplessly.

“We are in need of something masculine and potent but not overpowering,” Hannibal supplied, helpfully. “Perhaps something with base notes of tobacco and musk?” The shopkeeper looked to Will for confirmation. He smiled gratefully and nodded.

“I will put together some suggestions,” the man said smiling. Will was very relieved that the small store was empty as he was embarrassingly out of his depth. Part of him wanted to tell Hanniabal to buy whatever he liked but he knew that would be the same as giving him a pass for at least the rest of the day if not forever and he was not willing to give up that easily. Choosing a fragrance couldn’t be too hard.

It was, however, exhausting. He had no idea what constitutes a ‘fine’ aftershave. Everything he was given to smell was pleasing to him, if somewhat similar. Most were dark, smokey and woodsy, they reminded him of expensive whiskey, the few times he had tasted it. He rejected a few for being too overpowering or floral and Hannibal rejected anything containing citrus.

Finally Will found one he liked slightly more than the others. “What’s this?” He asked.

“ Tobacco Oud by Tom Ford,” the shopkeeper answered. “A very well balanced scent. Base notes of tobacco, agarwood, sandalwood, incense, patchouli, benzoin, vanilla and cedar, middle notes of cinnamon and coriander making it slightly more unique than many others. The top note is whiskey which gives it a lovely sharpness,” he said enthusiastically. “Sadly the majority of designer fragrances do not deserve their high price tag although this one is certainly worth every penny. May I?” He lifted the bottle and gestured to Will’s hand. “It is always wise to test a fragrance on the skin it is intended for to see how it mixes with a person's natural pheromones,” Will obediently held out his hand and the salesman placed a few drops on his skin. “Smell.” Will brought his wrist up to his nose and took a sniff. The cologne smelt even better on his skin mansculine and exotic with an addictive spice. He had barely dropped his wrist an inch when Hannibal caught his hand and brought it to his own nose. Ruby met sapphire as he inhaled deeply, his eyes falling shut and his lips parting.

“Perfect. Most appealing,” he purred, eyes almost completely black. Will felt like a butterfly pinned under his gaze and jumped almost guiltily when the shopkeeper spoke again.

“Have we found a match?” He asked, totally professional despite the obvious crackling tension in the air.

“Yeah,” Will answered, voice sandpaper rough and quiet.

“What size would you like? We carry one hundred millilitres, two hundred and fifty and five hundred,” he said, packing away the tester bottles.

“Five hundred millilitres,” Hannibal requested.

“Excellent choice,” the shopkeeper said with an approving smile.

“I quite agree,” Hannibal said, eyes still fixed on Will and full of want. Will let out a shuddering breath when Hannibal’s red tongue darted out to lick his dry lips, the intensity had him almost trembling. He turned his body away when he felt a familiar stirring in his crotch at the sight of Hannibal handing over his credit card once again, forcing his body to control itself as he took the small bag in hand.

“One more stop before we get your boots,” Hannibal told him, hand once again lightly resting on Will’s back easing the tension brought on by the busy streets. Will smiled tightly, grateful for the steadying touch.

“Are you planning on buying anything for yourself?” He asked as they moved down the icy streets. Deep grey clouds on the horizon threatened them with snow.

“Yes. I am in the mood for a new watch,” he answered, leading Will into another large department store with a gleaming jewellery counter.

“A wrist watch?”

“Yes,” Hannibal said, with a hint of amusement. “I believe that is where watches are traditionally worn.”

“I figured you for more of a pocket watch guy,” Will said with an innocent shrug though he was smirking.

“I do have a small collection of pocket watches,” Hannibal nodded, causing Will to laugh lightly. Hannibal smiled at the sweet sound, louder and more free than his usually soft huff of mirth. “But I find wrist watches to be more convenient.”

“Good afternoon,” he said to an older saleswoman with her back to the counter.

“Hello!” She sang, turning around with a beam. “What is it we are looking for today? Perhaps a necklace for the wives? I always know the men who leave it too late every year,” she shook her head good naturedly.

“I’m afraid your radar is off today,” Hannibal answered politely. “I am shopping for a mens watch. Gold Rolex, if you please.”

“Of course,” the woman responded brightly. She bent down the open one of the counters with a small key and pulled out a tray of shining heavy watches. Hannibal smiled, examining the expensive pieces, occasionally picking one up and bringing it to his wrist. Will considered the selection, they all looked rather similar to him.

“Yes,” Hannibal said, trying on his third watch. “I would like this one, thank you,” The saleswoman beamed again and moved away to box up the watch. Will was surprised, he’d expected Hannibal to take forever choosing the perfect ornament but apparently he had found what he wanted and saw no need to linger. Will picked up a particularly thick one and laid it against his own wrist. “No,” Hannibal said sharply. Will looked up in shock, he didn’t need a watch but he was surprised at Hannibal’s reaction. He placed the watch down and tried to keep his face neutral, he wasn’t disappointed, he was winning. Somehow he had managed to stop Hannibal buying him things. He had won! “Not that one,” Hannibal said more gently. Taking Will’s wrist in his hand he brought Will’s hand to rest of his forearm. “White gold would suit your complexion better,” he said fondly. “Here.”

Will looked at the more delicate watch Hannibal had chosen. “Why not regular gold?” He argued, more for the sake of it than anything else. Of course Hannibal wouldn’t go down so easily.

“Rose gold is also an option,” Hannibal suggested. Will shook his head.

“White is fine,” he said. “Not this one, though,”

“Why not?” Hannibal asked, tilting his head but placing the watch back on the tray.

“Too flashy,” Will answered. It was probably the most flashy of the selection with small jewels dotted along the entire wristband and encircling the face.

“Could you be convinced to tolerate a little bit of sparkle?” Hannibal asked, Will only just bit back a comment on the sparkle in Hannibal’s eyes.

“Perhaps,” he answered instead. His hand still in place on Hannibal’s forearm, gripping the wool sleeve lightly.

“I’ll take that as a yes,” Hannibal said happily, Will rolled his eyes and huffed out a small laugh. One hand hovered over the tray as he studied the lines of white gold with intensity before one caught his eye. He snatched it up and snapped it around Will’s wrist, turning his hand under the bright lights. “Yes. I like that.”

Will examined the watch, it wasn’t what he would choose for himself, but he would choose a simple leather strap. The strap on this piece was layered white gold, considerably thinner than the heavy thick strap of Hannibals’s, focusing the attention on the watch's face. Will did like the face, it was an intense dark blue, the numbers replaced with small sparlings gems, he was almost certain they were diamonds. Surrounding the face was a circle of small clear and blue stones that sparkling prettity. It was just the right side of too much and against Hannibal’s black sleeve it looked sophisticated and very expensive. “You don’t think it’s a bit too sparkly?” He asked.

“If you can’t sparkle at Christmas time, when can you?” Hannibal asked with a genuine smile. “I think it suits you brilliantly. Do you want it?” His voice was soft when he asked, seductive and coaxing, temptation thick enough to taste.

“Yes,” Will breathed before he had decided to. He felt his lower lip jut out when Hannibal removed the watch and asked to add it to his. It wasn’t the watch causing him to pout but the fact that he was no longer touching Hannibal.

“Do you own suitable cufflinks?” Hannibal asked, Will laughed and Hannibal felt a private thrill at drawing that sound out of him again. “No?”

“I don’t own any cufflinks,” Will answered. Hannibal shook his gravelly.

“Unacceptable, Will,” he said, voice low and eyes blazing. “Madam,” he called to the saleswoman, eyes fixed on Will’s darting briefly to his lips. “We need to see a selection of cufflinks please. Sapphires and diamonds.”

Will gasped. “No,” he whispered furtively. “Not diamonds, I don’t need -”

“Diamonds or sapphires, Will,” he interrupted in a low purr, bordering on a growl. “No arguments, I am insisting on this,” Will swallowed but stopped arguing instantly, a fire raging in his stomach. The woman returned with a tray of glittering cufflinks.

“Nothing too big or gaudy,” he requested in a small voice.

“Of course not,” Hannibal soothed, pushing Will closer to the counter. “Any catch your eye?” He asked.

Will fingered a pair with rectangular diamonds inlaid in black onyx. “These are, um, nice?” He said, awkwardly.

“Nice?” Hannibal repeated.

“Yeah, they’re…nice. I don’t l know I’ve never worn cufflinks,” he said in frustration.

“Tell us about this pair, please.” Will asked the attentive employee.

“An excellent choice, Sir!” She exclaimed with a cheery grin. “Each diamond is perfectly cut, completely flawless and colourless.”

“What about these?” Will asked, picking up a pair with circular sapphires surrounded by white gold.

“Ah, a slightly more whimsical option,” the woman said, more animated now. “The deep blue matched with the white gold means it goes with most everything and it would most certainly compliment the watch you choose. Your friend has expensive tastes,” she told Hannibal before turning back to Will.

“Both very fine choices, Will. Which pair would you like to have?” He asked, titling his head as the woman looked between them with curiosity. Will squirmed under her gaze and wanted to sink into the ground when Hannibal placed a light hand on his waist.

Instead he forced himself to stand and gazed up at Hannibal through thick lashes, his bottom lip protruding slightly. “I want both,” he almost whined. He saw Hannibal pause and he batted his eyes. “Please?” The weighty pause seemed to go on an age. Will was torn. Part of him hoped that Hannibal would smile sweetly and hand over his card yet again without a care in the world while another, the petty part, wanted him to deny Will and scold him for being a spoilt brat. He had started this game but he didn’t know who he wanted to win. He really wanted the cufflinks and he wanted Hannibal to buy them.

“As you wish,” he purred softly. “We will take both, thank you,” he handed over his card and smiled at Will with pride. “I am pleased to see you have stopped being so difficult,” he whispered, nose brushing Will’s ear. Will felt himself unconsciously leaning into the warmth, turning his head slowly until he was facing Hannibal, eyes focusing on his lips, so very close. They were interrupted by the saleswoman placing the bag on the counter with a pointed clearing of her throat. Will took the bag and put some extra distance between himself and Hannibal.

“Thank you Doctor Lecter,” he said, voice steady, refusing to give in completely. Hannibal nodded, enjoyment clear on his face.

When they stepped back out into the cold weather Will stayed just out of Hannibal’s reach, mind spinning and body humming with want. It wasn’t a rejection, and neither saw it that way, Will just needed space to think and Hannibal gave it, willing to give Will everything he needed. They crossed the road and reached the outdoors store Hannibal had pointed out earlier. “Will?” Hannibal's gentle voice pulled Will back to the present.

“I was kidding, my boots are fine,” he said weakly.

“Would you prefer to wait out here and trust me to choose a pair?” Will groaned softly. Hannibal looked at him seriously, genuinely worried that he had pushed Will too far, now treating him gingerly. “Please Will, the snow does pile up terribly in Wolf Trap.”

It was the genuine concern that broke his resolve into dust. He gave a tentative smile and entered the store, moving back into Hannibal’s reach. Hannibal’s fingers twitched but he did not reach for Will, as much as he wanted to. “Gloves,” Hannibal prompted, when Will almost walked past a rack of thick padded waterproof gloves.

“Oh, yeah,” Will said. “Not as many options here,” he said, trying to inject some of their earlier playfulness back into the exchange, missing the comfortable ease.

“Function over style,” Hannibal commented, a gentle smile on his face. He took a pair off the rack and moved back towards the display of winter boots.

A more relaxed atmosphere meant no employees rushed over to help so Will helped himself to two pairs to try, one a pale tan brown and other a warm chocolate shade. He sat down on a small chair and found Hannibal already waiting on his knees. He looked up at Will demurely, waiting. Will bit his lower lip, nodded once, a short jerk of his chin and Hannibal could barely contain the grin that threatened to split his face in two. He ducked his head and began to remove Will’s boots again. They would easily last another harsh winter, maybe even two. Will definitely did not need a new pair of boots and Hannibal was grateful that he had not completely shut down after their almost moment. A few more seconds and Hannibal could not have stopped himself and he would never dream of stopping Will. As if he could deny Will anything.

The pads of Hannibal's finger brushed over his heel, not commenting on the ragged hole in his sock as he pulled Will's foot into his lap, before pulling on the tan boot. Will smiled slightly once it was securely laced up, the comfortable weight was familiar and they fit perfectly. He nodded again and Hannibal returned his smile before tugging off the tan and setting it to the side. There was no need to try on the darker pair, they were identical except for the colour but instead of reaching for his own, perfectly fine boots Will just waited, his almost bare foot in Hannibal's grip.

He could feel the heat of Hannibal's hands through the thin fabric of his sock. He could hear employees pottering around, tidying displays and helping other customers but there was no-one looking in their direction while he waited. The second pair of shoes did not come, instead he felt Hannibal's left hand come to join his right, wrapping around the ball of his foot. He felt Hannibal's manoeuvring his foot, rolling his ankle and straightening the appendage. Will let his head tilt backwards, swallowing any protest, silently granting his permission as his reluctance to have his feet on show melting away under the warmth of Hannibal. Hannibal's thumbs pressed firmly against the tough skin of his arch, running upwards toward his toe in a firm stroke before returning to repeat the action. Will felt his spin relax and his soldiers slump, his whole body swaying backwards in relaxation as his breathing grew audibly ragged. A high keening sound slipped out when Hannibal placed his foot back on the ground, he thought he heard a soft soothing shushing sound before his other foot was given the same attention, a warm palm cupping his heels and rubbing it in a circular motion. When Hannibal's thumbs dug into his arch, harder this time a groan came unbidden from deep in his throat, he felt Hannibal's hand still but only for a few seconds before repeating the motion again and again until Will was almost panting and thanking any God that was listening for the fact he wore jeans today rather than slacks that would be obviously teniting right about now.

Once Hannibal had satisfied himself he moved to place the darker boot on Will's foot giving the younger man a chance to regain control of his body and regulate his breathing. Will thought of snakes and dead bodies and Jack's nerve-rattling bark and anything that would have a cooling effect on his traitorous dick that had suddenly developed a strong interest in his therapist, the position not helping. "Good?" Hannibal asked once the boots were firmly laced up.

"Yeah," Will's voice was broken, barely audible. He cleared his throat a couple of times then spoke again. "Yes, really good," his voice still vaughly dreamy but at least it was no longer shaking.

"Do you want the tan or dark brown?" Hannibal asked. "Both?" he suggested in a hopeful tone with a teasing smile. Will shook his head but let out a breathless laugh.

“No, just the darker ones,” he said, bending over to remove the boots himself, not trusting Hannibal to do so, or not trusting his own reactions. Hannibal rose gracefully to his feet and moved over to a bright display as Will donned his own boots and placed the tan ones back on the rack.

“Ice scrapers,” he said, joining Hannibal at the display. “We don’t all have garages to keep our windshield clear,” he added, failing to conceal a smirk. Hannibal smirked in response before opening his mouth. “Don’t you dare suggest buying me a garage,” he interrupted quickly. Hannibal laughed quietly and Will saw him mouth something along the lines of *spoilsport.*

“It seems like a complicated way of removing ice or snow,” Hannibal said, examining the many tangled leads of the display piece.

“That is why most people use this,” Will told him, picking up a plastic blue scraper. “Takes forever on the bad days,” he said, placing it back before realising what he’d done. Without another word Hannibal grabbed a box containing one of the expensive electric ice scrapers and walked to the counter. Will followed, shooting him an annoyed look.

“We can’t have you arriving late to crime scenes because you have wasted time removing ice with a child’s toy,” Hannibal said firmly. “You know the FBI is helpless without your unique insights,” he said with a proud smile. “Your remarkable talents.” The bored worker rang up their purchases without a word and wished them a good day with very little enthusiasm.

They placed the collection of bags in the trunk of the Bently before retreating to the heated insight of the car as dusk began to fall. “I need to pick a couple of Christmas gifts on the way back to Wolf Trap, if you do not mind.” Hannibal said as they moved towards the more commercial area.

“No, that’s fine,” Will answered, happy to extend his time with Hannibal. Will raised an eyebrow when they arrived in the parking lot of a large department store covered in flashing decorations and fake snowmen. “Festive,” he observed.

“The only compliment that could be given to this display,” Hannibal answered dryly, opening Will’s door for him. They entered the heated store to be greeted by heaving crowds and blaring cheesy Christmas songs,

Will visibly winced and shrunk back towards Hannibal. “I can’t imagine what you would buy from a place like this,” Will said.

“You will find out later,” Hannibal said. Will hummed in interest and raised an eyebrow. “I only have a couple of things to pick up, would you be more comfortable waiting here?” Hannibal suggested pointing out a fly fishing area with only a couple of customers browsing.

“Yes, please,” Will answered, embarrassed by his obvious eagerness.

“I doubt I will be long. See you soon,” Will all but sprinted to the corner while Hannibal melted into the crowd. He already had gifts for Will wrapped at home. Hand stitched beds and custom collars for each of his dogs along with a first edition book on the history of fly fishing and another on the role of bugs and wildflowers in forensic investigations. Will was right that there were very few things he would buy from a discount megamall but this close to Christmas this was the only place that had what he wanted in stock, and for a fraction of the usual cost.

Will examined the lures displayed in the fly fishing area. He was used to putting together his own lures built from whatever he found around his property, bits of fur and the odd feather. His work was good but he was tempted by some of the brighter lures here. The store had helpfully listed which fish would be attracted by which colours and textures. He was happily reading the information and examining each detailed colourful lure when Hannibal returned with a large bag. Hannibal arrived just as Will was examining a box containing eight different lures, all shaped like small fish with feathers in place of tails. There was one lure for each colour of the rainbow and a white and silver larger lure on the end. “Very pretty,” Hannibal commented. Will jumped and almost dropped the box but Hannibal caught it before it hit the ground with his quick reflexes. “Though I don’t see why these would serve better than your own creations,” he tilted his head to the side.

“The ones I make are put together from bits and pieces I find walking the dogs. There isn't as much to be found this time of year and usually I don’t know where any of it has been and sometimes there’s something that seriously turns off the fish,” he explained. “It took me years to learn how to do it properly, before I could afford proper lures.”

“I imagine it takes a great amount of patience to put together something so delicate, and a great amount of skill,” he said. Will shrugged, self-deprecating as always.

“Years of practice,” he answered,

“I don’t recognise these utensils,” Hannibal said, distracted by the display of knives.

“They're not designed for cooking,” Will told him with an eye roll. “They’re for gutting and boning the catch. The better the quality of the blade, the more meat is suitable for cooking.”

“I have always been forced to buy fish from the market rather than straight from the river,” he said with a faint smile. Will was so much more animated talking about his favourite pastime. “Perhaps one night you could provide the meat for dinner?”

“I’d like that,” Will said with a smile.

“Tell me, how do you tell what makes a good quality blade?” He asked, turning his attention back to the gleaming knives.

“Some of it is personal taste,” Will began. “The size of the fishers hands or the kind of fish they are trying to lure. Personally I like a slim long blade,” he said, picking up a blade with a dark rosewood handle. “The wooden handle just has a nicer aesthetic than resin or metal,” he added with a small smile. He removed the sheath and examined the shining mental turning it over in the light. “Very nice,” he said quietly. Hannibal licked his lips watching the way Will’s eyes focused on the glowing edge of the blade, his hand wielding it with careful grace. He imagined the blade drenched in the blood of some lesser creature, his Will elevated to what he was meant to become. When Will was done admiring the blade he went to place it back on the rack Hannibal took it from his hand and placed it on top of the lure box he was holding. He gave Will his sweetest smile and moved towards the counter. “Let me pay?” Will asked. “It’s not that much.”

“Nonsense. If you are going to provide meat for my table the least I can do is buy you the required tools,” he quickly handed his card to the flustered teenager behind the counter before Will could protest further. He took the plastic bag and pressed it into Will’s hand, his long fingers, stroking over the back of Will’s hand. “Just accept the gift, Will.”

“Your card looks tired,” Will said, face deadpan.

“It will survive.”

Will smiled, genuinely and took a deep breath before looking Hannibal in the eye with no challenge or tease, just genuine affection. “Thank you, Hannibal,” he said with sincerity. He quickly looked away and Hannibal let out a long breath, grateful for Will’s aversion to eye contact. Had he looked at him any longer with that sweet, grateful stare, Hannibal would not be held responsible for his actions which would definitely have them both arrested for public indecency. He smiled in disbelief as they swiftly exited the store. Not only did Will always make his person suit feel too tight and restrictive but he broke down Hannibal’s self-control so easily. If anyone else did that Hannibal would have already served them up as dinner but he found that was no longer an option with Will. Hannibal would miss him terribly once he had dined on every last atom of his beautiful, delicious body.

Will sat with his new lures on his lap on the way home, running his fingers over the box before opening it up to examine the lures more carefully. He occasionally noticed an impressive detail and told Hannibal what was so special about it. Hannibal listened and pressed for more, loving the way Will’s voice sounded and how he was more pleased with his reasonably priced practical gift than a diamond and sapphire rolex. His dear Will was truly one of a kind.

When they pulled up to Will’s tiny house the sun hand long set and the night was illuminated by a sliver of moon and a blanket of twinkling stars. Will immediately opened his door to release his excited pack who dived through the snow in delight before he returned to the car to empty the trunk of its many bags. It was only then that Will noticed that none of the bags were for Hannibal who had slipped his own watch into his pocket. He blushed slightly when he realised that the idea of Hannibal devoting an entire day to him was a pleasant one and more than a little arousing as well.

Although he tried to avoid dwelling on the feeling, Will often found himself feeling unworthy of such attention. His mother had no interest in knowing him and although Will respected and

loved his Father he often had to focus on his work leaving Will alone most of the time. His relationships were often short lived or dead on arrival so no-one had ever devoted such attention to Will.

Hannibal had always been different from anyone he had ever met before. Will had seen more than one therapist in the past and he had instantly shut down for every single one of them, no matter what tricks they employed or what they wished to discuss. It wasn't deliberate, more of a pavlovian response, he suspected there was some bad experience he was repressing.

But with Hannibal things were different. When Hannibal asked a question he was driven to answer even when it was uncomfortable. If any other therapist had inquired about his sexuality he would have snapped that it was none of their business and went back to glaring at their feet. When Hannibal asked he answered and spent the next day obsessing about why Hannibal had asked before offering to protect Will from the overwhelming crowds of prying potential donors. Could that be the reason that Hannibal insisted on buying him a bespoke suit and such expensive accessories? Because he didn't want Will on his arm in an ill-fitting, unflattering suit and scuffed shoes. Will rolled his eyes at his own depressing thoughts as he went to turn on the heating, trying to warm up his little home as the dogs came pelting back inside, bored of the cold weather. He knew he was overthinking things, after all, hadn't Hannibal explained that he had more money than he knew what to do with? His excessive spending probably didn't mean anything to him.

Still, it had been nice.

Hannibal was waiting for him in the kitchen when Will came back from the boiler room. The bags were piled on the kitchen table with two unfamiliar gift wrapped boxes in the centre of the table. "Merry Christmas, Will," Hannibal said warmly, pushing the box towards Will.

"It's December first," Will said. Hannibal shrugged nonchalantly.

"You wanted to see what I would buy at a megamall," Hannibal said. Will tried not to laugh at the way the word sounded in Hannibal's crisp accent. He examined Hannibal's expression, he looked expectant and interested. His expressions were always subtle but Will was proud to admit that he had gotten quite good at reading his therapist, his friend. Will knew he had lost their little game long ago and by this point felt that the situation was 'in for a penny in for a pound' so to speak. With a polite smile he unwrapped the larger box and found two jars of expensive coffee beans and a brand new bronze coffee machine. The same brand and model

that resided in Hannibal's kitchen. Will smiled with a pleased laugh. "You once said you wanted one," Hannibal said.

"I remember, thank you," he said, secretly hoping that this did not mean he would not be offered coffee every time he visited.

"Of course you are always welcome to join me for coffee in my kitchen, I always enjoy your company," Hannibal said as though reading Will's mind. Will often had the feeling he could do that though he preferred to ask the right questions to coax Will into voicing his thoughts. "The other one, please." On closer inspection the smaller package, the length and width of Will's forearm was actually a cylinder rather than a box. He unwrapped it quickly to find a dark grey thermos with a large white W printed on the side. "I had the misfortune of trying the FBI coffee a few days ago," Hannibal explained.

"Awful, isn't it?" Will said with a laugh.

"Atrocious," Hannibal said, lip curling in distaste. "I am aware of your fondness for caffeine and thought it would be a kindness to save you from such a vile liquid."

"How very white knight of you," Will said with a laugh.

"It is rude to laugh at someone who had just given you a gift," Hannibal warned, placing a hand on the box containing the coffee maker. Will bit back a grin and tried to look contrite.

"I'm sorry, Doctor Lecter."

"Good boy," Hannibal said smoothly, moving in closer. "An attitude of gratitude is most becoming on you."

"Don't bite the hand that feeds," Will quoted.

“A stupid saying,” Hannibal said, voice dropping in tone.

“How come?” WIll asked, curiously.

“I prefer to feed myself rather than repress the urge to bite,” Hannibal said with a growl. Will stepped back as a frisson of fear chased by excitement ran up his spine.

“C-can I make you a coffee?” He stammered, needing to do something with his clumsy fingers.

“A raincheck?” Hannibal suggested. “I’m afraid I have some work to do, a rather needy patient insisted on a Sunday appointment and I should be properly prepared,” Will silently regarded him, wondering if he had done something wrong. Something had shifted and Hanibal was back to his usual placid self.

“Oh, okay,” he said, oddly disappointed.

“Thank you for a lovely day Will,” Hannibal said politely. “I hope to repeat it sometime?”

“I hate the January sales,” Will said, playfully.

“Valentines day it is then,” Hannibal said, flirtatious challenge back for just a moment before his mask of calmness slid back into place. “Goodnight Will.”

“Goodnight Doctor Lecter.”

Will was left with an unbearable nervous energy once he was alone. He fed his dogs, set up his new coffee machine and made himself a cup of coffee, maybe not the best idea but he needed to keep his hands busy. He forgot how good real coffee tasted although it wasn’t as good as Hannibal’s, he probably added some sort of herb or spice, Will would ask at his next appointment.

He unsheathed his new knife to examine it. It was a lovely tool, beautiful and razor sharp. He ran his tongue along the edge, wincing as the skin on his thumbs spilt. He sheathed the blade and stuck his thumb in his mouth, the wound was not bad and only shed a few drops of blood. Will placed the knife in a cupboard with his other gutting and preparation tools. Playing with knives was clearly a bad idea while he was so revved up.

Will carried his bags up to his bedroom and closed the door to unpack them without his dogs hindering the process and covering everything in hair and drool. He noticed there were three pink paper bags from Miss Celine's. The first just held his old green coat which he tossed into the back of his closet, telling himself he'd go back to wearing it when the weather improved. It had nothing to do with how nice he looked in his new grey coat which he'd hung up by the door with much more care along with the green scarf.

The second contained eleven ties, all folded neatly in boxes. He opened each one, caressing the smooth fabric. When he came upon the black slim tie he inspected the gems more closely, he hadn't even thought about what the crystals were but after the rest of the day he'd had he was aware that they might be a lot more valuable than he'd assumed. Diamonds? Surely not. He counted the boxes again, certain he had only given his approval to ten, technically twelve, but two Hannibla had vetoed for unknown reasons. The eleventh was a paisley tie in peach and turquoise. Will rolled his eyes and paced it on the counter, making a mental note to return it to Hannibal the first chance he got, though he suspected it had been a deliberate mishap. He arranged the ties neatly in his draw, the plainer ones he would wear for work.

Under the neat black boxes were a collection of small garments. Pulling them out he went pink. Hannibal had bought him underwear, thank God they were plain boxers in shades raging from white, through grey and into black, at least two dozen pairs. He kicked off his boots, jeans and boxers, cringing at the small damp spot, to try them on. The only thing more embarrassing than accepting them would be returning them, Hannibal would never know he was wearing them. Will had to repeat that thought a few more times before trying on a plain back pair, they were snug but not indecent and very very comfortable. He pulled a pair of sweats over them and placed the rest in a drawer. As well as boxers were several pairs of dark grey socks. Will grinned and threw his worn out pair in the trash and pulled on a fresh pair. After rolling the rest into balls he placed them with his new boxers before investigating the third bag.

He smiled. Shirts. The kind that required cufflinks of course. He pulled them out one by one. The first was blinding white and when he slipped it on it fit well, Miss Celine had promised there would be a cobalt blue made his measurements arriving with his suit although Will could not see any shift fitting better than this one did. The second was a sky blue, lighter than

Will would choose for himself but when he held it up against his chest in front of the mirror he had to admit it suited him. It would go particularly well with the sapphire cufflinks, he thought. The final shirt was a deep plum, he appreciated the dark colour, he might have chosen it for himself if he'd been given the chance. He hung all three up carefully before they could attract dog hair from his duvet cover.

The green leather gloves he placed on a table, ready to be picked up on his way out of the door. He pulled on the red fur lined pair, sighing at the softness against his palms. The supple buttery leather felt wonderful against his rough stubble, more luxurious than anything he'd worn before. The matching scarf brought out the darker tones in his curls and the soft hat kept out the cold still invading his house. He left it one while folding the scarf carefully and placing it with the gloves.

The leather shoes were as shining and soft as he remembered, plain and simple with no added flair or patterning. He tucked them into their box and placed them on the wardrobe floor, determined to keep them clean until the gala. The heavy brown boots he placed on his show rack. His current boots were just fine but he preferred the new darker pair and left his snow dampened boots abandoned in a corner, wishing that he had thought to get some slippers. Next time? He hung his thick winter gloves by the door, the leather much too fine to be subjected to dog hair and fresh fish, he smiled at the thick waterproof material.

He pulled the heated scraper out of its box. Will had never used anything but a plastic scraper and couldn't deny that in the dead of winter it was not the best way to start the day. He pulled out the instructions and ignored the flashy promises about how quickly it worked. It didn't look too complicated and he looked forward to using it in the morning, the weather had promised to turn rather nasty overnight.

Unwrapping the watch, he clipped it onto his wrist and watched the jewels cast sparkling rainbows against the wall. He had never cared about material possessions when he couldn't afford them but he couldn't deny his new things were sparking joy in his chest. Will admired the dark blue face as he adjusted the time so it agreed with his phone's clock. Expensive and ornamental at it was he intended to wear his diamonds every single day. The elegant cufflinks he kept in their box and placed them atop his wardrobe well out of his dogs reach, they were well trained but he never thought about teaching them not to eat diamond cufflinks.

Only one small bag remained containing his improved scent that still lingered on his wrist. He placed the elegant black bottle on his bathroom counter and dropped his former scent in the trash, wasting two thirds of a bottle. It wasn't until then that he realised that there was not a single receipt to be found.

He stretched out on the bed, after letting his dogs in to jump all over him, and went back over the day. Hannibal had easily won the game that Will had started but with a bottle of designer aftershave in his bathroom and a beautiful watch in his wrist Will didn't feel like he had lost. His mistrustful side told him that Hannibal wanted more than his gratitude but he had the opportunity to push Will into more and didn't. At the jewellery counter he had thought for a minute that Hannibal was going to kiss him and he would have allowed, even welcomed it, had wanted it, more than he ever thought he could.

Again in his kitchen his heart had been pounding when Hannibal talked about his urge to bite. The almost feral snarl in his voice had caused his core to melt and he'd been forced to put the table between them just to keep upright. Everything about Hannibal sent him spinning. For unknown reasons Will trusted him more than he had anyone else but at times he felt like prey backed into a corner. When Hannibal moved in close, everything about him screamed predator, his deep growl, sharp canines and dark crimson gaze terrified and thrilled him in equal measure, even his scent drew Will in. That scent lingered in the room now but it was faint and fading fast leaving Will longing for more.

He reached for his phone, thumb hovering over Hannibal's name and wishing he had a real reason to call. He shouldn't, Hannibal had to work. Texting would be okay, if Hannibal really was too busy he would answer when he had the time. Will absent mindedly stroked Winston's ears while debating what to text, he bit his lip and smirked to himself when he had an idea and began to type.

Hannibal was relaxing in his study, pencil moving swiftly over the page as he filled in the shading on a sketch of Will half-naked and bathed in candlelight with a look of intense pleasure on his face. He flipped the page and began on a close up of Will's eyes, pupils almost eclipsing the swirling ocean blue of his eyes. One day he would have Will sit for him, beauty like his needed to be immortalised properly and Hannibal would allow no-one else to have that honour. His passion for Will became more possessive with every day. He had always intended to separate Will from the harmful influences in his life but now he wanted to keep Will all for himself, only his. Whatever it took, Hannibal would be the only thing in Will's life, all he wanted and all he needed. His phone buzzed in the quiet of the room and Hannibal's lips turned up when he saw it was a text from Will.

W: You forgot to buy me a belt.

Remarkable boy. He licked his lips, imagining the taste of Will's sweet lips on his.

H: How neglectful of me. I will personally present you with one worthy of you in the next few days.

W: Thank you, Doctor Lecter.

Hannibal smiled and reached for his ipad bringing up a favourite website of his that specialised in leather goods, the same website that he had ordered the dogs collars from. He selected a slim black belt for Will and clicked next day delivery, picturing Will's face when he arrived at the FBI offices to gift him expensive leather in front of Jack Crawford and the science team. Marking his claim further. He paid for the belt and decided to buy another gift for his delightful minx.

Within moments he found the perfect thing. A thin silver chain link choke collar, not tight enough to mark his lovely skin unless he tugged on the matching leash but heavy enough that Will would feel it always. It was accessorised with a neat padlock that only Hannibal would hold the key to. A future gift for when Will agreed to be his forever.

His spoiled greedy boy.

End Notes

Yes I know that knives should be locked away but it's my fictional megamall so there.

As always, kudos and comments bring me joy. Constructive criticism and requests are always gratefully received and responded to. Let me know what you are hoping to see in the remaining sins.

There will be a slightly longer wait before jealousy as one lucky reader (of my supernatural fics, at least) has won their very own fic so I will be writing some fluffy Crobby before jealous Will.

See you soon.

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!